

Number Three of the
CHORD

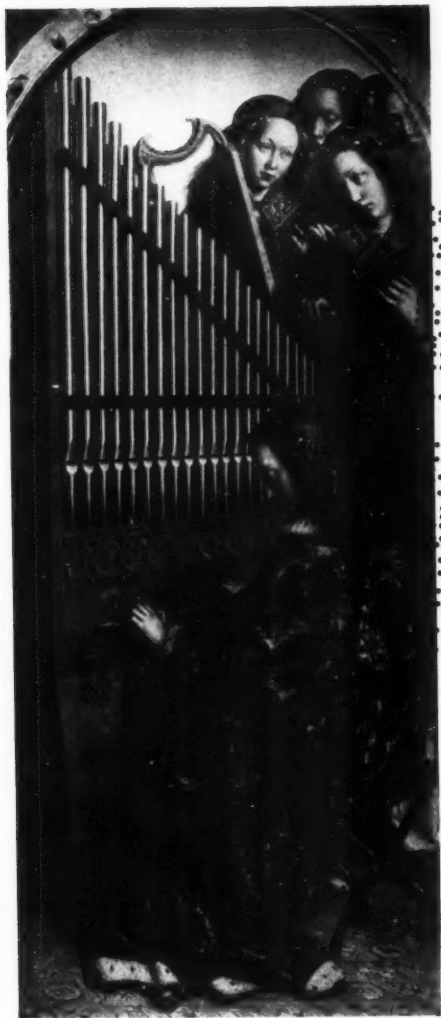
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TWO GROUPS OF
From an Altar-piece by Jan and



GROUPS OF ANGELS
by Jan and Hubert Van Eyck

GROUPS OF ANGELS



THE UNIVERSAL PITCH

WHAT is the natural and scientific pitch? That is the question which jumps to the mind in reviewing the recent and most voluminous discussions on the subject. One gentleman, in writing to the Press, boldly attempted to prove that Nature had been before the Philharmonic Society and Messrs. John Broadwood & Sons,—a suggestion which, it may be thought, almost contains the subject for a libel action. The writer to whom reference has been made was awakened one morning at five a.m. by the song of a black-bird. It is refreshing to hear that that sweet bird sang in tune, and the adherents of the Diapason Normal must wish he had been caught and brought forward as a witness. For the writer says that the song of the blackbird was B flat, D and F, followed by A, C and E flat in the treble clef. The awakened sleeper hastened to his piano (here follows an advertisement), which had been tuned to the New Philharmonic Pitch, to ascertain at what *pitch* the bird was singing. To his astonishment he found that the pitch of nature coincided exactly with $A=439$! This pretty little story is used as a preface to these few remarks on the pitch, because it embodies precisely what the plain man wants to know about it. "Why," he asks, with that uncomfortable falling back on essential facts—"why is the present pitch of $A=439$ vibrations a second, at a temperature of 68°

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Fahrenheit, to be considered the natural pitch? Is there a natural pitch? Has there ever been a natural pitch, and will there be one in the future?" These be difficult questions to answer, and yet the bottom of pitch arguments seems to be knocked out unless some answer can be given. Why $A = 439$ any more than $A = 454$, the old Philharmonic Pitch? We can only cite the instance of the blackbird singing at the Diapason Normal. All that can be said is that there must be a limit of pitch and that there should be uniformity.

The subject would bear a lengthy treatise, but so much has been written that the readers of THE CHORD must be referred to text-books and to the blue-book¹ issued a couple of months ago, in which all the newspaper correspondence and articles have been collected into an amorphous mass of sense and nonsense, of attempts at impartial elucidation and bare-faced support of the old Philharmonic Pitch from interested motives. Briefly, the history of pitch is one of gradual development, as in every other department of music, from the symphony to the music-drama, and the only clear idea to be culled from an examination of that history is that pitch from the earliest days has shown a disposition to rise, until the old Philharmonic Pitch was a full semi-tone higher than the pitch for which Handel, Purcell, Mozart, and Beethoven wrote. Unfortunately the most reasonable thing to do—lowering the pitch by a whole semi-tone, a course of action which would have made the tuning of organs and other instruments a comparatively simple matter—has not been done, for the simple reason that continental nations are employing a pitch which is higher than that of Handel's day. Dr. Richter was made to assert in an interview that the Vienna pitch is actually a semi-tone lower than our

¹ *Musical Pitch*. London: Waterlow & Sons Lim.

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old Philharmonic Pitch; but if he really said so he was mistaken, for the pitch employed in Vienna is now shown to be practically the Diapason Normal. The plain man, then, must not bother his head by seeking for a scientific reason for the fixing of the present pitch, the main idea being to range the different pitches of continental nations into one line.

But though a scientific reason for $A = 439$ at 68° Fahrenheit cannot be given, there is a practical reason for the fixing of musical pitch at something like the present Diapason Normal, and it is because that reason has been overlooked that it has become necessary to lower the pitch. The reason is simply that the compass of the human voice is limited, and consequently music written in the days when the pitch was a full semi-tone lower is too high now. A tenor here and there who glories in his high notes, and desires the world to take account of his exceptional gifts in that respect, may publicly state that he is in favour of the high pitch, but the bulk of singers has hailed the Diapason Normal as a most desirable reform. Roughly, the fixing of pitch must be guided by the central idea that both extremes of the human voice should be as effective as possible. Thus, if it be as high as the old Philharmonic Pitch the high notes suffer, and if it be too low the low notes are poor and toneless. The Diapason Normal is generally held to be satisfactory for both extremes of voice, and that, together with the fact that most nations are using a pitch as close as possible to $A = 439$, are the real factors that have determined the adoption of the New Philharmonic Pitch. The plain man of inquiring mind must be content with this empiric settlement of the pitch question, for he will ask in vain for a really scientific reason.

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If you look at the matter broadly, the question of pitch has practically been a battle between the voice and instruments. The tendency of the pitch to rise has been due to the gradual growth of the orchestra. The violins have remained the same, except that rather thicker strings were in general use in the old days. It might perhaps be shown that the growth of violin virtuosoing led to the employment of thinner strings, and in its turn induced Costa to raise the Philharmonic Pitch ; for the thinner the string the less is the tension, and there is a certain degree of tension below which tone is not good. That also applies to pianos. But probably the determining factor has been the development of wind instruments. There is no doubt that most of them are more effective at the high pitch, or at least they would be considered more effective by those who are all for brilliancy of effect. The orchestra has had to grow, and this rise in pitch has been one of the defects of the growth—a defect, be it understood, only as regards the use of the voice with the orchestra, for otherwise a man may quite reasonably hold, as Costa did, that the high pitch for the orchestra is more brilliant and effective, especially if the violins have thick enough strings to allow of the tension necessary for good tone. And side by side with the tendency of the orchestra to rise in pitch there has also been the gradual improvement of the mechanism of the piano. In the old days it would have been impossible to tune a piano up to the old Philharmonic Pitch. The strings would not have stood the tension. And then when the strings were gradually thickened the frame-work of the instrument was strengthened, and manufacturers found that the greater tension they could get the better was the tone of their instruments, and so they gradually tuned them up higher and higher. But this tendency has had a curious

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effect. It led makers to invent mechanism which should stand an enormous strain; and to such perfection has this been brought, that nowadays a first-class piano can give just as fine tone at the low pitch as it used to do at the high, for the frame-work is now strong enough to stand thick strings at enormous tension. The pianoforte manufacturers have recognised that their instruments have reached a point of perfection beyond which, from their point of view, it is almost impossible to go, and they find that their pianos are just as effective at the low pitch as they used to be at the high. And that brings us to a curious aspect of the recent pitch discussion. All the big makers have been in favour of the low pitch, because they know the tone of their instruments will not be less brilliant; whereas the smaller men who manufacture cheaper pianos do not see how they are to get as good a tone at the lower pitch, because their instruments will not stand well in tune at a lower tension than is now employed, and they do not see their way to strengthening the instruments so that they may stand thick strings at a higher tension. Almost all the opposition to the Diapason Normal has been on these lines. The makers of wood-wind instruments, especially for military bands, have been dead against the innovation; and naturally, because if the War Office adopts the Diapason Normal, as it must logically do, every manufacturer will have a large stock of instruments on hand which can only be converted to the low pitch at considerable cost. The expense of the new instruments to army officers has been put forward as a strong reason against military bands adopting the low pitch; but surely, if manufacturers chose, the matter could easily be arranged without any great initial cost to the officers, and without any direct Government grant. All that is required is that the instruments

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should be supplied on a kind of hire-purchase system, and as the credit of a regiment is practically the credit of the Government, there would be no real difficulty in arranging this. The manufacturers of military band instruments, however, do not want the War Office to make a new regulation, for the natural commercial reason already given. In short, there is, and can be, no serious opposition to the universal adoption of the Diapason Normal. It is much better for the voice than the high pitch, and it is not less effective for the orchestra and pianos, and, above all, it has the merit of being practically universal. The only difference now is one of temperature. The French pitch is $A=435$, at 59° Fahrenheit. In the open air that is about equal to our present pitch, but it is not high enough for operas and concerts, and therefore, in France, opera and concert orchestras have to find their own pitch evolved from the open-air standard. The plain man will therefore be grieved to learn that the pitch question is not quite definitely settled yet. There is also the danger that our own makers of wind instruments will take a lower temperature than 68° F. as their starting-point, so that it looks as if all that can be said of the recent pitch discussion is that it has at least brought matters into a kind of agreement. The absolutely Universal Pitch is perhaps a dream—and certainly it is a dream that has not yet been realised; and, being largely dependent on temperature, it is difficult to understand how it can ever be more than a dream of perfection.

MUSIC IN THE ROMAN CHURCH

It has been the reproach among the austerer Christian sects against the methods and practices of the Roman Catholic Church, that its services are too deeply identified with an artistic sensuousness that makes an excessive appeal to the senses of sight, scent, and sound. From this conventional accusation there has grown up a sort of tradition that in every province of the senses the Roman Church can command rare and ecstatically alluring resources. Mr. Kensit, we may take it, has no personal objection to the bare fact of incense—incense for its own sake. Nor, one may go so far as to dream, does he object to the beauty of a fine rood-screen, as the mere pagan embellishment, let us say, of Somerset House or of a Temple of Krishna. It is because these things represent a certain spirit, a definite system of emotional thought, that they are smoke in the eyes and vinegar to the teeth of various agreeable agitators. And certainly in these two matters of scent and sight, the Roman Church does hold a very high and seductive artistic position indeed. The fragrance of every flower that blows, the soft attractiveness of rare frankincense, are assuredly grateful to the human nostril, while to a lover of ceremony there is nothing so exquisite in its order, its beauty of vestment, and its solemnity of surrounding, as an elaborate ceremonial, weaving its ways to an issue in the sanctity and

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splendour of a Gothic cathedral. Yes, there is no question about Rome doing the handsome and luxurious thing in these two respects; and it is generally concluded by both outsider and disciple that in the third respect of music, something of the same excellence is in the average, in the long run, won from commonness and everyday life. It is this third point that I propose to discuss in as general a manner as may be.

The fact is, unfortunately, that although the Roman Church possesses in her treasury-chest some of the finest music that has ever entered the brain of man, her average musical performance all the world over is deplorably inartistic and vulgar. The general music, I may go on to state after this somewhat sweeping proposition, of the Church is divided into the music sung either to the words of the *Graduale* or to the words of the *Vesperale*. The *Graduale* contains the Mass Service of the whole liturgical year, thus including the Introit, the Gradual, the "Kyrie eleison," the "Gloria," the "Credo," the "Offertorium," the "Sanctus," the "Benedictus," the "Post-Communion," and the "Agnus Dei." Anybody who knows anything of Mass music will at once recall that the choral service usually known as a "Mass" is concerned with the words of six out of these ten divisions. The *Vesperale* holds the words of what is known as the "Divine Office," which consists of Matins, Lauds, Tierce, Sext, None, Vespers and Compline. Of these the antiphons and hymns from the "service" to which music of an informal nature is given, for, all the ecclesiastical world over, the psalmody is sung to the fixed forms of plainsong. These, then, are the two great divisions of ecclesiastical music in the Roman Church, and, strictly speaking, they exhaust the purely rubrical order of musical services. In

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more modern and more sentimental times, however, a variety of "devotions" have stepped upon the scene, and for these special services have been fashioned. The Rite of Benediction—still looked upon with doubt in the more severely archaic circles of ecclesiastical life, and assuredly opposed in the completest and most definite manner to the spirit and practice of early Christian days—has collected an enormous bulk of modern music around it; while that very popular institution of recent times, a hymnody in the vulgar tongue, is responsible for an almost endless collection of tunes which are to be heard sung in the churches upon almost any provocation. In a general view of the music of the Roman Church, these divisions may be taken as practically exhaustive; and I proceed to treat of each as it might appeal artistically at present to any reasonably informed human being, who might pick out an average centre of Catholicism in order to acquire therefrom a knowledge of the musical ways of that Church.

It is certain that every great composer, save the man just of to-day—and a well-known Irish Protestant just of to-day has also accomplished the feat—has tried his hand upon the liturgical words of the Mass; and it is also certain that the result has been shown in the production of a very notable collection of masterpieces. You may or may not agree with me that many of the old Plainsong Masses have exquisite beauty and distinction of phrase; for indeed the ignorance of Plainsong, what it is and how it is to be sung, is so universal, so vast (particularly in certain quarters where an affectation of knowledge precisely exists) that an appeal to the public on this ground is to call upon the west wind to cease blowing. But there is Palestrina, and there are the successors of Palestrina. There is the magnificent work

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of the eighteenth century men, and, in the nineteenth, of such musicians as Weber and Gounod. (The "Benedictus," by the way, of Weber's Mass in G is among his most exquisitely and simply beautiful fancies.) I put such compositions as the Masses by Beethoven and by Bach aside as not properly belonging to any ceremonial of the Mass. They were compositions for no such occasion; and it is safe to say that no practical choirmaster ever thought of producing them in their totality for anything save a very extraordinary celebration. But there are Masses by Mozart, by Haydn, by Gounod, and by a great number of excellent but lesser lights, which are perfectly capable of performance by almost any reasonable choir. I mention these bigger names separately as lamps that lead the way. But there is an almost inconceivable abundance of material here which only needs a fairly keen critical knowledge to effect a very satisfactory selection indeed for almost any sort of choir. In a word, there is no excuse for the performance of poor Mass music in any tolerably equipped Roman Catholic church.

What, however, is the real fact? There is scarcely a church in this country where it is possible to hear what should after all be not the rarest of all experiences—I mean a Mass sung with due consideration given to the quality of the music *and* the resources of the choir. My experience has been pretty extensive; and my conclusion has been almost invariable, that either the music selected has been due to mere indifference, or that the choice made has been without any reference to the real strength of the singers. And not only in this country, but in Italy, in France, and in Germany there is the same complaint to make. I have heard, for example, at the Jesuit Church in Munich, Mozart's Seventh Mass sung with so incredible a combination of

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ambitious purpose and wildly inartistic fulfilment, that I did not know whether laughter or weeping was the most natural method of showing my dislike and contempt. In Italy the thing has degenerated for the most part into mere farce; and if the music of the much bepraised Sixtine Chapel is fine in quality, there are no words too severe for the manner in which it is sung. In a few churches, of course, you have excellent singing and excellent music. In one or two of the grave monasteries the lovely Plainsong is still to be heard solemn and appealing, sung with dignity and seriousness. Here and there, too, where the resources of the church can well afford the expenditure, you have music not unbrilliantly sung and often with an amateur distinction; but I fear that even the most popular of these do not impress me very deeply. I always have a sub-consciousness that this is an attempt rather than a fulfilment. "Wanting is what?" asked Browning; perhaps here the lacking element is the perfection of professional accomplishment which should surely be found running in harness with such ambitions.

To look at the matter a little more in detail, I would select, however, for consideration, so far as this island is concerned, Fort Augustus in Scotland, and the London Oratory in England. At Fort Augustus nothing is ever sung save strict Plainsong. And here you have the music of the Roman Church exemplifying rightly the convention to which I have already alluded: that by sound, no less than by scent and sight, that Church appeals peculiarly to the senses. For the Plainsong, attentively and intelligently sung, is of the very essence of the Roman spirit in ceremonial and in decoration. Foolish people who hear it droned in some of the churches of the secular clergy, have a declared opinion that this body of music is both

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ugly and dull, without melodiousness, without form, without rhythm. I remember, a winter or two ago, a lecturer who had something of a passion for Plainsong delivered an address on the subject, practically illustrated by vocal examples. It was clear that to him the supposed absence of rhythm had to be supplied in some way; accordingly, in the examples which he set before his audience, he chose to have them played and sung in the *tempi* of modern music according to his own discretion. I ought not to have to point out that such a treatment of Plainsong entirely ruined all its meaning, all its own special significance. It was another proof that even to the enthusiast its language is not properly intelligible; and for that reason it is right to say that however intimately Plainsong is contemporary with and explanatory of the external Roman system, it is not possible that it will ever again have a really widespread vogue. At Fort Augustus you may note, indeed, its exquisiteness, its real but elusive rhythm, its fine sensuousness, its militant emotion, and (when it is austere) its grave and solemn austerity. But the days when Gregory sent out "cantores" to teach Plainsong to all the cathedral and monastic choirs have gone by; and if one would hear it aright, it is to such monasteries as Monte Cassino, Beuron, Maredzons, Solesmes, Downside, Belmont, or Fort Augustus that a man must go. He will not hear it in the casual church which he may happen to enter.

The Oratory is my instance in point on entirely the other side of the line. A little Plainsong, very badly sung, is in the general programme, for the Introit, Gradual and Post-Communion; but, apart from that, the choir is set to sing highly elaborate music of modern masters. I am given to understand that a large annual sum is expended upon

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the choir ; and certainly the results are exceptionally good. You will always find that extreme care has been devoted to the selection of the voices, that the rehearsals have evidently been abundant, and that the music chosen for performance is for the most part of a masterly and distinguished character. I say for the most part, because naturally the institution founded by Father Faber must insist upon the performance of Father Faber's dreadful hymns, set to the dreadful music about which I shall have to speak later. You will hear, then, Gounod, Mozart, Haydn, and all the best composers of Mass music—if you except a few of the most elaborate compositions, which, as I have explained, are not intended for common use—exceedingly well interpreted at the Oratory, which has so far entered into the spirit of modernity that on Good Friday last, when, by the ordinary ecclesiastical rubric and law, all music is suppressed, an orchestral performance of Tschaikowsky's Pathetic Symphony—a curious choice, if you come to think of it carefully—was permitted. There is nothing more despairingly and hopelessly pagan in all music than this Symphony. But I digress ; I come to my point with this. The Oratory in England represents the modern musical spirit in the Church of Rome with perfect completeness. It shows what can be done in the matter. It is, if I may put it so, a living and an obliging demonstration of my thesis that the Roman Church could fulfil the popular theory concerning her music, if the work was taken up in the right way. As a matter of fact and as a general rule, the work is never taken up in the right way.

It will be urged, on the other hand, that there is probably not another church in England where the resources devoted to the Oratory Choir could be given up to a similar object

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without devastating the funds of the mission. And of course it would be the height of absurdity to make any such claim upon poorer churches. The point is, that you can have a reasonably dignified Church service without spending one stiver more upon the church choirs than you are now spending in order to obtain a result that is frowsy, tawdry, and ragged. But the thing is allowed to slide if only some semblance of music is produced. And so you have Miss A. singing duets with Miss B. to the words "Domine Fili, Jesu Christe," as if they were singing "O that we two were maying," or "There's life in the old horse yet," and to music which would disgrace a tenth-rate writer of music hall songs. Or if it is a male choir, you hear thunderous basses without a note in tune, and emasculated tenors whose high register reminds you in some unaccountable way of hair-oil, engaged over worrying the most solemn words of the Creed, as though they were prize-dogs and the Creed were a sack of rats; or calling upon the Lord to give them peace in a way that, could they have been heard last Christmas at Pretoria, might have provoked the Boer ultimatum six months before its appearance. Of course there are exceptions. Of course, so far as London is concerned, there are churches, such as St. George's, Southwark, Farm Street, and the Pro-Cathedral—where, by the way, I heard the other day a magnificent rendering of the Ratisbon Gregorian "Requiem" for the dead in South Africa—where the musical service is often dignified and mostly satisfactory. I speak of many, many casual churches in the provinces, abroad, and of some in London; and my conclusion is that, as a rule, the art of music is not only neglected, but is disgraced and dishonoured

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So far, I find clearly that my theory is justified, that the Roman Church does not fulfil the trilogy of excellence usually claimed for her in her presentation of sights, scents, and sounds. She is the confessed mistress of the first two. Her servants make havoc of the third through sheer want of expert knowledge. And so far I have dealt entirely with the music sung during the Mass. For the rest of my case is an easy gallop to the winning post. The Hymnody could not be worse. Although it is a fact that the Plainsong hymns of the *Vesperale* are nearly all beautiful, the popular hymn music of the churches is nearly all as vile as vile. The late Father Faber wrote a number of hymns in the vulgar tongue, the words of which are now popular in every Catholic church, and which are marked by an equally popular but wholly detestable series of musical achievements in tune. I shudder to remember the tunes of such hymns as "Daily, daily," "O Mother, I could weep for mirth," "Hail, Queen of Heaven," and others. They are literally worthy of the music hall, instinct with commonness and vulgarity. As to the music of the Benediction Service, the best that can be said is that the new series of "Cantiones Sacræ," just being published by Messrs. Novello, show at all events an effort to bring this side of the musical question into a somewhat more dignified atmosphere. But for the most part everything here is, like the rest, at sea. That there is fine music to be found for the vocal portion of the Benediction Rite, is true; but it is amongst a mass of rubbish; and the odds are that you will hear the rubbish nine times out of ten in attempting any chance experiences. . . . It is the old story. There can be no coherence without the one directing brain, the big paramount influence. When Gregory in the West brought the music of the

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Catholic Church into one grand selection from a mass of material, he accomplished a feat which has in the passage of time lost its tremendous influence. Since then the broad channel has parted, and the many-parcelled stream has gathered much refuse in its changed flow. For one artist can make a School of Art; ten thousand amateur dabblers in music can never build up a school of any kind. They would be negligible (like the suburban piano) if they did not set up so perverse a hubbub. I know not how to teach the suburban piano art. I only know that it is essentially bad: and so finish my parable.

Vernon Blackburn.

ANGLICAN CHURCH MUSIC

ANOTHER Church Congress is over, and much music has been discussed. I am not here concerned with the papers by the organists of St. Paul's and Southwark Cathedrals, or the timely appeals by Drs. Parry and Stanford on behalf of a higher standard of taste than now obtains in choirs and places where they sing. What seems to me to call for some remark is an optimistic address by the Bishop of Richmond on the "History of English Church Music." The impression left on one's mind by the bishop's remarks was that everything was for the best in the best of all possible churches. Never was such a liturgy; never was such music; and never were such musicians. The roll of worthies claimed for his communion would appear to have included alike the Catholic Tallis and Byrde, and the Protestant Merbecke and Tye. Like the mighty man of Scripture, he let not one of them escape: all were sheep of the Anglican pasture; or if I may be allowed to mix my metaphors a little, they were, in other words, "the Fathers of English Church Music." This in spite of the fact that there was an interlude called the Reformation, and the further fact that the best-known Anglican compositions of these "Fathers" are adaptations from the Latin. Of course to people of the bishop's way of thinking, who believe that nothing happened at the Reformation,

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these adaptations mean very little ; but to the ordinary plain man who has no theological axe to grind, they only tend to confirm the often-proved fact that something did happen at the Reformation, and that it was not a mere question of abjuring an Italian bishop and commencing to say our prayers in the vernacular, but a deliberate abolition and suppression of the Mass and its accessories. As Mr. Birrell would say, "It was the Mass which mattered ; it was the Mass which made the difference." Communion was substituted for Mass ; table for altar ; Protestant for Catholic ;—and whatever these terms may mean now, there was no mistake as to their meaning in people's minds at that time. The charge against Merbecke was that he had "denounced the Mass" in writing, and Byrde's "presentations" before the Archidiaconal Court were under the Penal Laws, which forbade anyone to "hear Mass." It therefore becomes a question whether the title "Fathers of English Church Music," as applied to Tallis, Byrde, and their contemporaries, does not stand in need of some little readjustment ; whether it would not be more correct to call them the last of the Old Catholic composers. The truth will be found to lie between two extremes—first, the popular belief (crystallised in handbooks of the "Bonavia Hunt" type) that on the substitution of "Communion" for "Mass" our composers apparently became good Protestants, and busied themselves in setting to music "the purified liturgy of the Anglican Church" ; and second, the "continuity" theory of modern High Churchmen, which postulates the retention of the Mass, and assumes that in composing "services" and "anthems" our Tallises and Byrdes as good Catholics were only doing in English what they had been wont to do in Latin. Like many other comforting

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theories, this particular one shows badly when an appeal is made to history and monuments. To see what it is worth, we must briefly glance at the state of affairs in England during Elizabeth's reign.

It seems hardly necessary to say that until the papal Bull of 1570 threw Elizabeth into the arms of the Protestant party, she was disposed to look on at the religious struggle with contempt and indifference. Glorious old pagan as she was, her religion may be summarised in—"I will be Queen of England." Even when her throne appeared in danger, and motives of policy prompted the Penal Laws against Catholics, she said in effect to the Reformers: "Reform my country as you please, but do not presume to meddle in my personal affairs; and, above all, do not dare to suggest what style of service I am to have in my private chapel." Hence the mutterings against "popish practices in the queen's chapel," and "papists among her musicians," were never more than subterranean.

And this brings us to the part played by the Chapel Royal. Ever since the time of Henry V. the services and music had increased in splendour and magnificence. Under the Tudors they were the admiration of Europe, as the frequent letters of foreign ambassadors testified. Regarding it as an appanage of the Court, Elizabeth was not disposed to have it shorn of any of its splendour at the bidding of reforming prelates. On the contrary, she maintained as ornate ceremonies as were consistent with the new form of worship, and not merely did she retain the services of all her musicians, but created posts for others such as Tallis and Byrde, though she could have been under no illusion as to their religious opinions. They were useful to her, inasmuch as they upheld the high traditions of Chapel Royal

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music; and so long as they were willing to "lie low," and refrain from obtruding their Catholicity, they were sure of her protection. Their position is perfectly intelligible. If Elizabeth treated their posts purely as Court appointments, it is not surprising that they should regard the services as Court functions which need not trouble their consciences. The fact was that people had by that time seen so many religious changes, that they really were not inclined to believe in the permanence of this last one. Hence the large number of Catholics who outwardly conformed "waiting for a golden day," as they put it, while they secretly practised their own religion. I will only mention one instance of this, as it refers to the Chapel Royal. In the Life of a certain priest named Weston (imprisoned under the Penal Laws until 1603) occur letters from two different people, describing how at a secluded country mansion in Berkshire they were able, by observing great secrecy, to have "sung" Masses in the chapel right through the penal times. The head of the family—a Mr. Bolt or Bold—was an enthusiastic musical amateur. His family and friends formed a choir for the elaborate music which they seem to have performed, seeing that "other instruments" supplemented the organ. One of the writers, in describing a great Mass which they held on "Corpus Christi" day, adds: "We met there also Mr. Byrd, the most celebrated musician and organist of the English nation." In the same work we hear of a member of the Bolt family being apprehended under the Penal Laws in 1593. He had previously "lived for two or three years at Court, being in great request for his voice and skill in music." Elizabeth was too politic to interfere on his behalf when once he had become sufficiently notorious to bring himself within the meshes of the law, but her attitude is sufficiently

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indicated by the annoyance she showed in losing so good a musician. As a contemporary account says: "The Queen having heard of his departure, fell out with the master of music, and would have flung her pantoufle at his head for looking no better to him."

This being the situation at the Chapel Royal, it is only natural that when their benefactress desired to provide the Prayer-Book with such music as Cranmer had urged on Henry VIII. (note against note), they should have complied with her wishes, and written services of which Tallis' and Byrde's in D. minor are the types. Here, indeed, we have the true model of the Anglican "service," but it does not help the theory of the Bishop of Richmond. It was regarded at that time as a successful attempt to replace the "curious singing" (as the glorious old contrapuntal music was called) by simple chords which could be "understood of the people."

One is tempted to ask the Bishop of Richmond, who has doubtless studied these services of Tallis, Byrde, Patrick, Strogers, Bevin, etc., whether he can lay his hand on his heart and seriously say that he believes such dreary successions of full chords to be a development in music, and not a dislocation. They bear the same relation to the Masses and Motets of their authors as does a pot-boiler to a work of art. This is the only "English" Church music of which our old composers are the "Fathers," and I venture to think that few are disposed to wish them joy of their paternity. That the style was a failure soon became evident; musicians turned their talents to other purposes than setting a liturgy which even in the case of undoubted masters had (doubtless on account of its novelty) apparently proved so barren of inspiration. Hence at the most brilliant period of English

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music, the contributions of the glorious school of madrigal writers—Benet, Bateson, Weelkes, Wilbye, Ford, Philips, Dowland, Pilkington, Kirbye (to say nothing of Deering and Robert White)—to the English service are conspicuous by their absence. (Even Morley's "English" Church music is meagre in quantity, and vastly inferior in quality, to such of his Latin music as I have seen. It is also noteworthy that none of it was published during his lifetime.) This may be seen by a glance at the first important collection of Anglican music (Barnard's), issued in 1641. Its wholesale adaptations from the Latin afford clear evidence that Anglicans of taste had even then recognised that for her best music the Church must fall back on adaptations from the old composers, rather than on the new style which she had created. That they were right, is evidenced by the fact that the compositions which survive and are most popular in Anglican Cathedrals to-day, are those which were thus "lifted" from the Catholic service. I need only name Tallis' "I call and cry," Byrde's "Bow thine ear," Tye's "I will exalt," and Gibbons' "Hosanna to the Son of David," as examples. Some idea of the extent of these adaptations may be gathered from the fact that the Latin originals of no less than nine English anthems are to be found in Tallis' *Cantiones Sacrae*. Of the seven anthems by Tallis which appear in "Barnard," five are adaptations from his Latin works. Of Byrde's contributions to the same work, two are adapted from his *Cantiones Sacrae*, two are taken from his *Songs of sundrie natures*, and a fifth, "O Lord, make Thy servant Charles," could not possibly have been written to those words, as Byrde was dead before Charles became king. I have no hesitation in describing Gibbons' *Hosanna* as an adaptation of the Palm Sunday antiphon, "Hosanna

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Filio David," so closely do its phrases fit the Latin ones, without dislocating a "quantity" or necessitating the alteration of a note. This can only be explained on the assumption that Latin was the original form—the genius of the two languages being so different. A second reason for my belief is that the English words, although supposed to be taken from Matt. xxi. 9, are not (as they stand) to be found in any of the four Gospels, but they do, up to the last sentence—an obvious tag—follow the Latin of the Roman rite. The same applies to Tye's "I will exalt Thee," the English words of which, while differing from both Bible and Prayer-Book, agree with the "Offertorium" in the Roman Mass for the Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost. In the same way the music of Redford's "Rejoice in the Lord" is a strikingly good "fit" to the Latin Introit for the Third Sunday in Advent; and Mundy's well-known "O Lord the maker" is nothing more than a free translation of "Te lucis ante terminum," the Latin of which it fits like a glove. One could readily imagine an exceptional instance or two where the music fitted English and Latin alike, but in the large number of these old anthems which I have compared with their equivalents in the old "Graduals," etc., the coincidences are so persistent that I cannot regard them as the result of accident. Isolated instances mean nothing, but an accumulation of instances means much.

Again, if the motets of this type had been originally written to English words, one would have expected them to follow at least some edition of either Bible or Prayer-Book, instead of the old Latin service books. I have noticed another peculiarity in these adaptations which shows that the adapters were in no doubt as to what was "Catholic" and what was "Protestant," and that they believed they were adapting

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for the use of one religion what had been originally written for another. I am not going to talk theology or offer any opinion as to which party was right and which wrong; I only state the fact that whereas the essence of the old religion had been the Mass and its sacramental teaching, the essence of the new one was repudiation of the sacramental idea. Consequently when it was desired to adapt a motet containing "sacramental" allusions, no attempt was made to translate the Latin, but different words were substituted. Thus Tallis' "O sacrum convivium" becomes "I call and cry," his "O Salutaris Hostia" is altered to "O praise the Lord," and Byrde's "Ave Verum Corpus" appears as "O Lord God of Israel." Not a single "sacramental" motet has been Englished to its original words. Further than this, in not a single instance has the music of a regular Mass been adapted to a Communion service, or anything else.

Although the "Proper" of the Mass (*i.e.* Introit, Gradual, Offertorium, etc.) was frequently drawn upon for anthems, it must be remembered that, divorced from their special service, these items became mere motets with no special "popish" significance. When wholesale adaptation was the order of the day, it is difficult to understand why the beautiful Mass music of the old composers was left untouched, except on the assumption that anything distinctively suggestive of the Mass was anathema. All this points to the fact that the breaking with old traditions at the Reformation had a like effect on ecclesiastical music. True, in the transition period we find music written for the old and the new service by the same men; but the two styles are so distinct that there is no difficulty in recognising which is which. There is no doubt as to which is the superior style of the two; there is no doubt that our Tallises and

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Byrdes considered themselves to be writing not different styles of music for the same ecclesiastical body, but different styles of music for two distinct bodies. If the Anglican Church has since adapted and assimilated the old contrapuntal music, it still remains as much an "outside" product as the music she has adapted from continental Lutheran or Catholic sources, with the sole difference that it was written by Englishmen. Whatever stimulating effect the English Reformation may have had on secular music, its progress synchronises with the decline of the great ecclesiastical school. Gibbons (full of the spirit of his master Byrde) was the last flicker in the socket, and to that style of pure devotional music—as Sir Hubert Parry said—we shall return no more.

R. R. Terry.

THE DECAY OF THE ORGAN

OWING, I presume, to its religious associations, it is fast becoming as dangerous to criticise the organ as it was once to criticise the Bible. But eminent divines who could not be accused of irreligion—though the irreligious did accuse them—essayed the latter feat and managed to avoid being burnt at the stake; and I, an organ-lover, one who has no desire to destroy but only to amend the organ, hope that I too may be permitted to survive after I have pointed out the defects of the organ of the present day. Whatever my ultimate fate may be, I beg infuriated organists to strike if they will, but to listen. If they keep their minds as well as their ears open, they will observe that with regard to the organ I am no fierce radical reformer, but a conservative pleader for a return to the ways of our forefathers; and they may observe as well, that every condemnation I have to utter carries with it a suggestion of a mode of amendment. When I come to deal with modern organ-music, I cannot hope to preserve this attitude of sweet reasonableness. One cannot reason, argue, about art and the quality of art. True, the best critic is the man who best knows why he best loves the best music, and finds the best reasons for liking it and for disliking the bad music. But the reasons are found afterwards: one cannot come to like or dislike music by reasoning. As this article is not to be an essay

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in musical criticism, I shall not attempt to find many reasons for feeling as I do about modern organ-music, but shall confine myself mainly to showing why, in my opinion, it could scarcely be other than it is. Even in this matter I beg the organists who read this article to restrain their anger. Many of them play in their churches music which I detest; but I do not therefore call them liars, fools, pick-pockets, and other choice epithets of the sort which have been hurled at me because I do not like the music they like, and have on one or two occasions said as much in public prints.

Here are my three propositions: first, that the organ is an old-world instrument, a contemporary of the harpsichord and clavichord, which reached its full mechanical perfection only in the present century for purely mechanical reasons; second, that while reaching this pitch of mechanical perfection it has degenerated in tone and all the qualities that should render it an artistic instrument; third, that the music written for it to-day is bad because it is written to suit a degenerate and inartistic instrument, and, moreover, cannot be good because the organ is not, when most itself, when in its most perfect artistic form, an instrument suitable for the expression of modern feeling. I will take these propositions in this order, and try to establish them.

The history of the organ may be read in any of the text-books, in Grove's *Dictionary*, and elsewhere. Precisely how much of it is true, and how much was invented by the late Mr. Rimbault, I neither know nor care. Mr. Rimbault was a very enthusiastic and hard-working antiquarian, I know; but if he did not know a thing he does not seem to have often shrunk from pretending to know it, or even from inventing authorities which did not exist and had never

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existed. But precision is not needful for my present purpose. We know that the organ was in the beginning one of the crudest of instruments. To play it one must have had the muscle and "science" of a prize-fighter: how to get the keys down—when once it had keys—without smashing one's fist to a mere pulp, must have been the great problem to be conquered by every would-be organ virtuoso. Rapid scale-passages must have been an utter impossibility. As a matter of fact, in those early days no rapid scale-passages were written. But when composers began to write them for other instruments, it is only natural to suppose that they wanted to write them for the organ as well. To render them possible, the organ-builders must have gone to work to devise means of lightening the touch of the instruments they built; and, as we know, little by little they did lighten it. But, as we also know, they did not, until comparatively recent times, succeed in lightening it by very much. Their great difficulty must have been this. The organ, though it was in old times used a great deal in small chambers, and though it is capable of most delightful effects in small chambers, is pre-eminently the instrument for large buildings such as churches; and I should guess that ninety-nine out of every hundred organs built since the building of the first one—perhaps even a larger percentage—has been built for use in the church. As churches were large—or at least most of the churches which could afford organs—it followed that the instrument had to be large to fill them with sound; and as large instruments mean large pipes, and large pipes mean large slides and generally very long "trackers" (the slips of wood that make the communication between the key and the pipe-slide), it followed that enormous pressure had, at the best, to be used

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to move these great planks of wood. The impulse, it may be added, to build larger and larger organs may not have originated alone in the size of the buildings for which they were intended. By the very nature of its tone, the organ is an instrument from which more and more magnificent effects can be drawn as its size is increased. So all the builders worked away their very hardest to erect huge instruments that would fill the largest cathedrals with rolling masses of organ tone; but with the best will in the world they could not possibly make the touch an easy one. An examination of the instruments built as late as last century reveals the greatest amount of ingenuity in the arrangement of levers, etc.; but no arrangement of levers, however ingenious, however carefully planned and carried out, can do away with the elementary principle that if a two-pound pressure has to be exerted by one end of a wooden rod, not less, but—on account of unavoidable friction—rather more than two pounds' pressure must be applied at the other end. The friction became greater as the various devices resulted in the weight of the movable parts becoming less, for the instruments were increasing in size all the time, and the communicating parts had to be made always longer and stronger, and therefore thicker. Beyond a certain point, the slides—the taps, as it were, which admitted the wind to the pipes and shut it off—could not be diminished. If the hole through which the wind went could have been diminished, the weight and friction might have been reduced to almost nothing. But, as every organist knows, to place a large pipe on a small hole, and then to apply a heavy pressure of wind, is very far from being the same thing as sending a lower pressure through a large hole. The old men, indeed, did not love a heavy pressure of wind: it did not suit the

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full, rich quality of the diapasons which they sought. So they were hampered in every way by the lack of proper mechanical contrivances. They did all that could be done in their day, but they could not escape from that elemental principle—that to lift two pounds your fingers must exert a pressure equivalent to two pounds; and they had not in the then state of science a means of dragging in an outside force to exert the pressure for them. This applies as well to their arrangements of stops and to their combination-pedals. A hundred things which are now the easiest in the world to do, were then absolutely impossible. Anyone who has played on old organs which have not been since fitted with modern actions, must have marvelled at his forefathers' strength of finger and of wrist. I have tried organs where the touch was so deep and so heavy, that sitting on the keys seemed the only possible expedient for getting them down. How many passages in Bach were played I cannot tell: I can only guess that as a rule they were not played at all, or were played at something considerably under what we consider the proper pace nowadays. Still, there must have been some players — Buxtehude, for example, the mighty Bach himself, Handel, and a few more famous organists of the old time before us—who could handle the thing; and as the music they wrote for the organ is not much less florid or difficult to play than the music they wrote for other instruments, one cannot deny that the instrument was one adapted to their needs. It would be a waste of time to speculate on what they might have done had the organ of their time, while keeping its gorgeous individual qualities, possessed the mechanical advantages of the organ of our time as well. But one thing is certain: music could not stand still, and did proceed on its course

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of development ; and organ-music could not and did not for ever remain uninfluenced by the things achieved in other branches of music.

Organ-builders must have been—in fact we know they were—perpetually on the lookout for any device which would make the action of their organs easier. Further many of them, most of them in the earlier days, were in their way true artists, and they wanted to make their organs as perfect as possible. Besides making their actions easier, they wanted to add new stops, and as every new stop, or combination of stops, necessarily added to the weight of the touch, they must have been more strongly impelled than ever to seek contrivances by which the touch might be lightened and the whole machine made to go more easily and steadily. But nothing could be done until the idea of calling in an outside power to assist the organist's fingers had been hit upon ; and it was not hit upon until after the steam-engine and electric telegraph had shown the way. Even those whose genius has the least mechanical or scientific bent, need not be told that a pressure of air can be made to do the same thing as a pressure of steam, and that just as to move a modern train of cars it is not necessary to get off and shove, but merely to turn a tap which sends the steam into the proper apparatus, so to move the slide of an organ-pipe it is not necessary to do it directly by the strength of one's wrist or fingers, but merely by a slight pressure of the finger to turn a tap which sends a stream of compressed air into the proper apparatus. This was the idea of I forget whom ; and it enormously simplified the organ-builder's work, and (even down to the present day) increased the organist's troubles with an instrument which is bigger than an elephant, as sensitive as a fiddle or a cat, and in unsuit-

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able weather as difficult to manage as a mad bull. The electrical apparatus works on exactly the same principle. The organist does not move his slides by his own strength: when he puts down the key he simply turns on a current of electricity which does all the work that formerly had to be done by his own muscular power. As yet neither of these modes of working can be said to have attained absolute perfection in the hands of the average organ-builder. A few—such as Willis—can build an organ which rarely goes wrong; but the ordinary builder, accustomed chiefly to the building of small organs, in which neither pneumatic or electrical aid is necessary, when he uses the electrical or pneumatic apparatus, generally sets up a thing which is everlastingly refusing to work, and makes the organist curse the day when the talented inventors saw the light or had their great inspiration. The difficulties that occur on the organs of inferior builders are not, however, my present business. They do not alter the fact that in the hands of competent men the pneumatic or electric device brings the organ fairly up to date. Everything that an artistic or inartistic organist could wish to do on an organ he now can do. Bach and Handel can be played with ease, instead of, as was the case until a few years ago, with infinite difficulty and a plenitude of perspiration; and effects dreamed of neither by Bach nor Handel, nor any other writer for the organ, are now at the disposal of every vicar's daughter. In the matter of composition-pedals, the same progress has taken place. Changes of stops that of old time nearly brought the organist off his bench, can now be effected by touching a tiny stop lightly with the little finger. The organ is become a modern instrument. But—

But it is assuredly become in the worst sense of the

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word a modern instrument. Organ-builders and organists alike have succumbed to that fatal disease which I discussed in my articles on the Orchestra: they have forgotten the true nature of the organ, and have tried to make it do the work of other instruments; they have forgotten the lovely and sought the ugly; they have made the organ a thing of noise, and little else but noise. The true basis of the organ is the diapason tone, just as the true basis of the orchestra is the string tone. The diapason tone, like the string tone, wears well. The ear becomes weary of reeds and "fancy" stops, just as it wearies of the wind and the brass of the orchestra, but the diapason tone is always rich, fresh and satisfying. It is the diapason tone, round, full and noble, of the old organs that makes them so delightful; it is the absence of diapasons and the presence of "fancy" stops that make ninety-nine out of every hundred modern organs merely things of terror, things to dream about, to hear in nightmares. But apparently the modern organist and the modern organ-builder like nightmares: the one draws up specifications of organs that look like nightmares, and the other builds them, and is proud of them when they are finished. When we look at these specifications or hear the finished instrument (one must call the wretched thing an instrument, and it is after all an instrument, though too often one of torture), we see or hear less and less of the diapason tone, more and more of the "fancy" stops. The Great is diminishing, the Swell is increasing; a score of stops that are not Choir stops at all are being crowded on to the Choir; the Solo organ, avowedly a keyboard of purely fancy stops, is being enlarged; and to these sorrows is being added the Echo organ, crammed full of stops that might be well enough in a music hall, but are terribly out of place on

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an instrument intended for serious artistic uses. What I have elsewhere called barnyard effects, are most sought after. The "orchestral clarinet" is more like the crowing of some fearful bird of night than any clarinet I have ever heard; the "vox humana" is admirably calculated to imitate the quacking of a duck or the clatter of a hen that has just been successful in laying an egg of unusual dimensions: there are orchestral ophicleides which make noises that remind one of feeding-time at the Zoo; in fact, not to make invidious distinctions between all the wild fowl and wild beasts, and tame fowl and tame beasts of the present day organ, as designed by organists and carried out by present-day builders, three-quarters or more of the stops are not properly organ-stops at all, but mere producers of extraordinary noises, either ear-tickling or nerve-shaking, better adapted, as I have said, to the music hall than to a serious instrument. As soon as one hears a Bach fugue or a Handel concerto played on one of these terrible things, one realises how much has been lost. There is now no genuine "full organ" possible: when all the stops are turned on there is nothing but a deafening unmusical row, a din in which all music is lost.

All this I set down partly to the modern craze for making one instrument do what is the proper business of another instrument, to the general loss of the sense of beauty, and to the vicar's daughter. The vicar's daughter—sometimes his wife—is a terrible nuisance in music. She may not be able to play the organ—in truth I have never yet known her to be able to play the organ—but she or anyone can sit down on the bench and tootle sweetly on the clarinet or oboe, or orchestral flute or bassoon; and she always thinks her tootling far better than a "dry" Bach fugue, however

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well played. And as the organist is in this country under the vicar's thumb, and the vicar is under his wife's or daughter's thumb, it follows that whenever an organ is built or rebuilt, there is a very strong tendency to disregard diapasons and full-voiced stops useful only in playing "dry" Bach music, and to pile on plenty of "pretty" stops of the sort I have mentioned. Another consideration must not be forgotten: a good diapason, made of good metal, of the full size, and properly voiced, is not a cheap thing; and nowadays every church wants as big an organ as possible at the lowest possible price. Consequently, even if the organist has not drawn up a specification filled with fancy stops, the builders, who must live by their trade, send in that kind of specification, because it makes a great show at a very small cost. This last consideration results also in so many latter-day organs having so many stops that run down only to the tenor C: the proud churchwardens can then have for, say, a couple of hundred pounds a number of stops that could not, were the organ a first-rate one, be set up for three times that sum. The churchwardens are quite content: they can boast of their organ of twenty-five stops, including couplers—of which the cheap organ-builder is careful to give sufficient—and they hear their favourite barnyard effects plentifully used in voluntaries, hymns, psalms and anthems. Cheapness, again, is responsible for the small scale of the diapasons: cheapness, a whole-hearted love of the ugly, and the vicar's daughter, have conspired to ruin the organ. In its way the organ generally built to-day is quite as ugly and useless a thing as the modern French organ, which is simply an overgrown harmonium. If it were necessary to prove my point to the unbelieving—which it is not, for there are no unbelieving—I could prove it by

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devoting forty or more pages of this magazine to specifications of new organs—and old organs rebuilt—which I have cut out of the trade papers during the last twelve months. But every organist knows as well as I do the trend of things in organ matters: he knows how enormously difficult it is to find a church with a really good organ in it—an organ with genuine diapasons, an organ from which a massive, full, rich, fresh forte can be got. Nearly every organist believes that the “cutting” in prices is the secret of the decay of the organ; only a few see that they themselves have accelerated the decay by demanding fancy stops to tickle the ears of their congregations. And whatever the causes, the decay is certainly there; and the process of decay will not cease until organists educate themselves, find out what the true nature of the organ is, and demand organs on which true organ-music can be played. If such a thing as an artistic organ-builder were possible in this century, he might help in the work of regenerating the organ, by throwing out the whole barnyard and congregation of wild fowl and wild beasts, and insisting on plenty of real organ stops. He would build organs with smaller Swells than we have at present—when the Swell usually contains more stops than the Great; with Choirs without any foolish orchestral clarinets or other follies; with Solos—if Solos we must have, and they are not in the least necessary—much diminished; and without any Echo organs or other tomfooleries of that sort whatever. A strong organ-builder might point out to Deans and the gentry who look after the building of cathedral organs, that a cathedral is not a music hall, and that it is as absurd to have an organ with Echo effects in a cathedral as it would be to have a ballet.

On most of these points, I say, most organists, and

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certainly every real organist—every organist who is an artist, will agree with me. I fear they will disagree with me, and express their disagreement with some vehemence, when I come to discuss the music nowadays written for the organ.

The basis of the organ is the diapason tone, and can never be anything else than the diapason tone. The diapason is a pipe without "fakes"; the oboe and all the reeds are "fakes," very agreeable in their way, very useful in addition to the diapasons properly used, but very likely—in fact, quite certain—to weary the ear long before it is wearied by the diapasons. The diapasons, as I have said already, are to the organ what the strings are to the orchestra; and this will only cease to be true when the organ utterly changes its nature and becomes indeed another instrument altogether. The swell-box is another fake, and everything within it is a fake. On the organ no true crescendo or diminuendo is possible: the result of working the swell-pedal and opening and closing the venetian shutters is not to get a true crescendo and diminuendo, but only to get a faked resemblance to these. I must own, after many years' experience as an organ-player, that to me the opening and closing of the swell-shutters never produces even the illusion of a true crescendo and diminuendo, but only the illusion of the organ coming nearer to me or moving off into the distance. When an organist closes his swell-box he does not make the music (to me, at any rate) *softer*, as music becomes softer when a violinist or a pianist applies less energy to his bow or to the keys: he merely seems to carry the sound-producing machine farther away. To do this is legitimate enough. I am far from wishing the swell-box abolished: if I had an organ of my own, I should have a Swell on it simply for the sake of this effect. But the organist, I insist, must cease to

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be deceived by this faked swelling and failing of the tone: he must cease to regard the approaching sound (I can use no other term) as he opens his swell-box as a crescendo, and the receding sound as he closes it as a diminuendo. He may use the effect for its own sake; but for his own sake, or heaven's, or mine, do not let him think when he is playing an arrangement of a slow movement from a Mozart symphony that opening his box produces anything like the effect Mozart intended when he put a crescendo mark over a passage for strings or wind.

The gradual crescendo and diminuendo, then, are ruled out; and what music can be played on the organ?

Obviously, all the music written in the days when the gradual crescendo and diminuendo—that is, the true crescendo and diminuendo—were less thought of than sudden increases and diminutions of the tone fulness and intensity and sudden contrasts; the music, generally speaking, that came before Mozart—the music of Purcell, Buxtehude, and the earlier men, and of Bach and Handel. The music written by the harpsichord is the music that can most effectively be played on it; much, indeed, of the music written by the harpsichord men for the harpsichord can be played on it. A great deal of Mozart may be arranged for it and played on it, just as one plays orchestral music on the piano—without dreaming that the result is anything more than a translation. Mendelssohn's organ-music can be played on it, though it is not true organ-music (any more than Mendelssohn's pianoforte music is true piano-music). Then there are the exercises of Hesse, Rinck and a few more German academics of the sort; but though these can be played on the organ, I see no earthly reason why any one should take the trouble to do it. Later than Mendelssohn

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there is absolutely nothing: there could not, in the nature of things, be anything. The only modern music that appeals to us is music filled with emotion—passionate music, written more to utter a thought or a feeling than merely to decorate the spaces of time; and to such music the constant use of the crescendo and diminuendo is indispensable. Fancy any music later than Beethoven without the crescendo and diminuendo! And fancy any music, worthy of the name, written to-day without the crescendo and diminuendo! The constant increasing and failing of tone intensity is an essential part of modern music: it is as important as the notes themselves. Such music cannot be given on the organ, as what constitutes always half the effect and sometimes the whole effect is impossible. The tone of the organ is solid, noble, statuesque; through it we cannot express at all the thoughts and emotions that shake us of the late nineteenth century. It is too good for us. It belongs to the old time when men lived their lives calmly—with dignity, without hurry, splutter and dust; when it took a long time to go anywhere, and one had a long time to feel anything in: when impulses did not crowd as they do now from the rapid ever-changing incidents of our modern life. What finer music could anyone wish to play than the music written in those days? Surely a page of noble Bach is better than the wretched contrapuntal exercises of Rheinberger—no one but an organist would dream of calling them music—or the music hall trash of Wely and Batiste. There is Handel, too, as I have said, and all the old men. There is a huge country of unexplored organ-music before the organist who wants to play what is absolutely suited, and not approximately suited, or possible only by fakes; there is no need whatever to try to play stuff which sounds even

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on the modern organ as well as the Walkürenritt sounds on a clavichord or spinet. Of course I am aware that church congregations would not like it ; but church congregations are necessarily vulgar, and never like anything which is not intolerably vulgar. It is a pity, for the organ is perhaps essentially a church instrument ; at any rate it is chiefly used as a church instrument. Unluckily the same vulgarity that makes thunderstorm and barnyard pieces popular, and Bach and Handel and the men of old time unpopular, hampers the organist in what is his principal and might be his most effective and artistic work, the accompanying of the choral music of the church. Nothing sublimer than the church music of Bach and Purcell, accompanied by an organ with a sufficiency of diapasons, can be imagined ; but nothing more wretched can be imagined than the cheap anthems of to-day accompanied on an organ notable only for its cat-call effects.

John F. Runciman.

THE ANGELS OF JAN AND HUBERT VAN EYCK

"SOME people hang portraits up, in a room where they dine or sup," said Browning, in a poem which somehow suggests dinner or supper much less than high tea ; and one might scribble a companion piece, which could not easily be the worse of the pair, beginning, "Some folks bad prints array, in a room where they sing and play." The shrewd persons who manufacture pictures for reproduction and circulation throughout the musical world, do not fail to perceive that the cheapest technique is commercially the most valuable when practitioners of one art fall to exploiting devotees of another ; and, as one would expect, poor content almost always fills this poor form. The popular painter's feeling for music, as divulged by his pictures, is very much like the popular musician's feeling for literature, as divulged by his choice and treatment of a libretto or a lyric ; so that, when one listens for the slow movement (as Millet wished the beholder to hear the bell of his "Angelus") in some cheaply painted picture, which should hang nowhere save on the line at the Royal Academy and over a Peckham piano, it is always cheap music that one hears. The gallant of the picture may wear Mozart's silver buckles, and the harpsichord on which the Jane-Austenish maiden is playing, may be a faithful copy of Mr. Handel's own ; but the music is middle Victorian all the same. At the best it is Mendelssohn or a sentimentalist's Chopin, and, more probably, it is "The

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Maiden's Prayer." As for the young monks who play American organs, with dummy pipes in front, what time angels, or seductive visions of earthly (and generally German) beauty, blur the stained glass behind; and the Saint Cecilia whose fingers caress an organ keyboard exactly like that of a very modern piano; it is seldom these performers get beyond an elevation by Scotson Clark.

When, however, good reproductions can be bought (at one-fourth the price of photogravures after Maud Goodman and Strudwick and Mr. Gotch) of such great masterpieces as Donatello's carved angels at Padua, and Fra Angelico's painted angels at Florence, and of such little masterpieces as those of Terborch, there is no more excuse for hanging bad pictures over the piano than for playing bad music upon it. Every musician may not want to banish Burne-Jones' "Chant d'amour" in favour of Giorgione's "Concert," for it cannot be denied that Burne-Jones gives much more musical instrument for the money. But the indispensable quality of a musician's picture (always provided it is well painted) must always be its assurance that if the stilled voice could burst forth and the player's hands move again, it would be to make no ignoble music. *The Lute-Mender* in the first number of this quarterly is quite an interesting picture to the painter, and in the musician it stirs that pleasant curiosity and expectation which he feels during a good player's tuning-up. Van Dyck's wife, in the second number, has evidently only taken temporary possession of somebody's instrument to pose with it prettily; and although it is quite as much a musician's picture as the Strudwicks and the Burne-Joneses, whose maidens nurse their harps and lutes as if they are theatrical properties, it is a painter's picture first and foremost.

The Angels of Jan and Hubert Van Eyck

The plates which accompany this note are from the wings (now at Berlin) of the great altar-piece, "The Adoration of the Immaculate Lamb," which Jan and Hubert Van Eyck began in 1420 for the cathedral at Ghent. Most of *The Chord's* readers will have seen at Ghent the copies of these pieces which are fitted into the places whence the originals were taken ; or at least they will have seen, or easily can see, the coloured copy of the whole altar-piece, with all its folding wings and panels, which was executed by the Arundel Society, and may be examined any day in the basement of the National Gallery ; but the reduced reproductions here given of the Van Eycks' actual work surpass in almost every respect the copies made by hand. It will be felt at once that these works, so astonishing to the painter, are not one whit less wonderful to the musician, and that two of the greatest painters of any age have here expressed the noblest music of their time. What these angels are singing and playing, of course we cannot know ; and if a phonograph, born out of due time, had preserved for us a performance of the early polyphonic music of the Netherlands, it would probably bewilder or even pain us. But one thing is certain, whatever may have been the Batiste's "Andante in G" of those days, this stately Cecilia is not playing it ; and whatever were the Moody and Sankey's hymns, and "Crown of Jesus," these wholesome unghostly angels are not singing them. If an artist, immeasurably finer and more skilful than Watts or Whistler, were to arise and paint Isolde's death-song in some entirely convincing and supremely beautiful way, we should have a modern pendant to these pieces by Jan and Hubert Van Eyck. Perhaps such an artist has already been born. But his name is not Fantin-Latour.

L. A. Corbeille.

THE DECLINE OF BAYREUTH

THERE are instances in physiological life of the parent organism falling away into a mere husk, while the living thing born of the organism begins to live the new life of its own. (That is, I think there are : certainly, for the purposes of my illustration, there ought to be.) Such, it seems to me, is to be the fate of Bayreuth, regarding it as a parent organism. With what splendid anticipation it was begun, with what expectation, with what confidence of final fulfilment! Only let me launch it, was practically Wagner's entreaty, and see what will come of it! To friends and to the indifferent alike, he spoke with the same enthusiasm. To the late Sir Charles Hallé, for example, a most unsympathetic listener, he rhapsodised with absolute fervour, apparently not noting, and certainly not caring about, that gentleman's "A noble aim, dear master," in reply. When Wagner died, the enormous support of his own immediate influence, the proximity, as it were, of his personality to the theatre he had founded, still kept the place up, he standing beneath it, as it were, a magnificent Caryatid. Then was the time for work. Then was the time for organisation, for scrupulous coding of policy, for the most careful measures to ensure the continuity of Wagnerism in Wagner's Theatre, as he himself had dreamed Wagnerism, and in practice builded it up. What followed was simply this, that practically the

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whole direction of the place lapsed little by little into the hands of Frau Wagner, certainly a very capable person, but without that absolute identity of purpose with that of her husband,—an identity of purpose which could only have been accomplished, as I have suggested, by an immediate and minute codification of laws and of rules,—which, as year passed year by, brought her very far indeed from the original point of departure. It rather reminds me of Jean Ingelow's poem in which the lovers walk hand in hand with a tiny stream between them ; and the stream grows and grows, till they are sundered by an estranging sea. Enter Siegfried Wagner!

There are some who seem to think that because Siegfried Wagner is the son of his father, he has more right than anyone else to carry on his father's business. That, it seems to me, is to bleat. To anyone not blinded by sentimentality, the statement of the bare fact carries along with it its own reputation. And the proof of the pudding is in the eating. What is Bayreuth now, after all? Gradually and gradually you find all the best singers, the erstwhile enthusiasts, the old colleagues of Wagner, dropping away from it and sending back to it as they go, alien and strange looks. "Life is too short to go to Bayreuth now," said one to me the other day, who was closely associated with Wagner in 1876, and who was, I believe, one of the board of trustees for the theatre after Wagner's death. For what do we get there, when we go? There is still "Parsifal," and the spirit of Wagner seems near that masterpiece even to-day at Bayreuth ; and I can vouch for one—the second—very fine performance this year of "Die Meistersinger." So much may be granted. But what of "Der Ring des Nibelungen," mounted with new scenery two years ago,

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and repeated again this year? Bayreuth was clean vanished. It was like the Palace of Aladdin transported in a single night to the Arabian desert. This paltry mounting, this wretched conducting (Siegfried Wagner, you understand), this worse than Italian-school acting,—were these things part and parcel of Wagner's dream and desire? Was this what he had fought for so long and so arduously?—he who in death so foolishly believed that he had, in Bayreuth, built up a monument more lasting than bronze,—

*Quod non imber edax, non Aquilo impotens
Possit diruere aut innumerabilis
Annorum series et fuga temporum.*

Alas! the series of years, which has not destroyed Bayreuth, but in which Bayreuth is fast being destroyed, is numerable enough. And I see no opportunity of arresting that downward progress.

For the Wagner family is paramount in Bayreuth; and the advice of the barbarian stinks in its nostrils. "We are the people," this family seems to say to itself, "and wisdom shall die with us." Here we have Siegfried Wagner, most amateurish of conductors, untried, inexperienced, gifted with an astounding self-confidence, placing himself in a position which at one time would have done honour to a Richter or a Mottl. More: the rumour seems to be confirmed that "Der Bärenheuter," a work fit only for performance in the kitchen of Villa Wahnfried, is to be performed in Wagner's Bühnenfestspielhaus. And when we come to that point we reach the end. I trust profoundly that the rumour may not prove true. The thing would be too preposterous, too grotesquely painful. But whether it be true or not, it is no less certain that Siegfried Wagner, with the policies of

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Bayreuth in his hands, is busily engaged over tolling its passing-bell. Peace to its ashes! I began this paper with a reference to the parent organism falling away and leaving the young life to start afresh. All the opera-houses in Germany, in the figure, are living anew the life which once flamed so high and so golden in Wagner's Bayreuth Theatre.

Vernon Blackburn.

BAYREUTH FROM AN AMERICAN POINT OF VIEW

Anyone who has ever turned an attentive ear to the writers on the subject of Bayreuth, has had accounts of "impeccable performances" and "ideal conditions" thrust upon him so fervently and so often, that at last he almost believes in them. However satisfactory the performances of Wagner operas may be in his own land, he is told by these croaking music sages that the real Wagner is only possible in Bayreuth. They speak of "ideal conditions" in such a lofty, reverent manner, that the uninitiated is cowed into silence. They cast halos about in such indiscriminate profusion that his dreams become troubled with visions of Siegfried wearing five or six, and of Frau Cosima sweltering under her holy load. Tradition in Bayreuth is said to be as thick as dust and as free to wallow in. A pilgrimage there is described as a short cut across the fields of Wagner-scepticism to the goal of perfect understanding. Rather a pretty theory, this! It nourishes expectation until one is really prepared to find perfect art ensconced in the barn on the Sacred Hill. About the time that one's enthusiasm is ripe, Frau Cosima, for

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various reasons proclaims her intention of holding a Festival. To secure seats, efforts are made which only yield results after influence and strategy have been applied vigorously—the same amount of political engineering would secure a very comfortable berth on the New York police force. It is part of the scheme of the Bayreuth business management to announce the house as being sold out very soon after tickets have been offered for sale. This stimulates buying, and advertises Bayreuth.

With tickets in hand, and eyes and hopes centred on Bayreuth, sea-sickness, fatigue and expense are borne with fortitude by the musical American. Eventually Bayreuth is reached, and the process of disillusion begins.

The very town reeks with tradition—the atmosphere is heavy with music and discussions. Nausea and strangulation threaten one's life. There is a strong desire to bolt into the free and open away from the mephitic atmosphere of Wahnfried. This mood grows with every day, and finally, after the last bit of expensive cardboard has been used, one goes to the station in the dead of the night, and boards an outward-bound train to escape. Until that time arrives, politics in Bayreuth are an interesting study. It is generally believed that the village is under the rule of the Bavarian Government. This is an error. The autocrat of Bayreuth is the cosmic Frau Cosima, and among her various edicts is one which proclaims her son Siegfried a musician. Exactly how this discovery was made is not recorded. But to live up to this reputation, and to prove his mother's veracity, Siegfried wrote an opera, and he conducts it—happily not at Bayreuth yet. No one would cavil were he to confine himself to his "Bärenheuter." But he insists with his father's "Nibelung's Ring," and occupies the conductor's chair at Bayreuth. So good Frau Cosima rids herself of one compet-

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ent conductor by quarrelling with his wife, and allots to Messrs. Richter and Fischer "Die Meistersinger" and "Parsifal."

As a result of this division, Siegfried conducts all performances of the "Ring," and clamours for more. And he conducts them very badly. After five weeks of daily rehearsal, a few artists (who are bold and honest enough to express an opinion in Bayreuth) confess that they do not know what *tempi* Siegfried desires. In fact, it is quite safe to assert that he does not know himself. In consequence, the attack of the band is ragged, and the work of the singers uncertain. He either drags until the brass are out of breath, or bullies them out of time and tune. Rhythms are distorted beyond recognition, and authentic *tempi* are merrily bowled over. He does not know the first principle of accompanying. The singers are compelled to watch the movements of his bâton so closely that they have never a thought to devote to their voice and acting. Only occasionally does one dare to trust himself out of Siegfried's sight and to sing a phrase intelligently. Both audience and artists are under a nervous strain, and both rejoice when the last curtain is down.

For the sacred privilege of listening to such performances, eight audiences pay Frau Cosima a lump sum of about £12,000. This should tickle her vanity, and ought to gratify her sense of humour. At the close of the Festival the Wahnfried Mutual Admiration Society gives a banquet to the artists. On this occasion, Dr. Hans Richter, after indulging in other inane remarks, refers to Siegfried as a worthy son of his illustrious father. "Titurel and Amfortas may die in peace," continues Richter, "with Siegfried at the helm the Bayreuth Festivals are under the best guardianship imaginable." This is either a politic lie or maudlin sentiment; there is little

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excuse for either. Under Siegfried's bâton it is scarcely fair to criticise the singing of the artists. The only remaining point is the "ideal conditions" attending Bayreuth performances. What are they? Persons are now admitted after the doors have been closed and while the orchestra is playing. Silence and the removal of feminine headgear are not voluntary on the part of the audience. Much of the scenery shows signs of wear, and some of the rest is hideous in colour contrasts. The costumes, with very few exceptions, are atrocious. Siegmund twice draws the sword half-way out of the oak before the crucial moment arrives. Siegfried's anvil shows very plainly where it is going to split. During a trio one of the Rhinemaidens is precipitated by the breaking of some mechanism. Brünnhilde is permitted to wear an ordinary wedding ring in addition to the one given her by Siegfried. These details—some unfortunate and some inexcusable—shatter Bayreuth ideals most effectively. Nor is Bayreuth proof against petty quarrels and intrigues. These flourish here as everywhere else, and altogether Bayreuth has very few advantages over other modern opera-houses. A few important reformations in its management, a change or two in its roster of conductors, and some new scenery, would elevate its standard perceptibly. So long as Bayreuth performances continue under the present reigning Cosima, it is a waste of good time and precious money to journey there to hear the "Ring."

E. E. Ziegler.

AS OTHERS DON'T SEE US

THE intelligent foreigner makes terrible mistakes. He goes away with a firm conviction that Mr. Chamberlain is an earl and that Lord Salisbury is Her Majesty's father-in-law ; he mistakes cricket for a kind of deadly duel, and football for a genuine innocent game ; he is sometimes uncertain as to whether or not ladies go to church in evening dress ; he generally confounds St Paul's with the Stock Exchange. But terrible as he is, it seems quite likely that, in musical matters at least, he may in time have to deliver up the victor's palm to the intelligent Scot. For the mere Scot we have the fullest measure of respect ; but the Scot either without unintelligence or with a perfectly miraculous gift of concealing it, is a thing before which we shall have to bow down in silent awe, begging him on no account to say anything about us. Here is a Doctor Charles Maclean who has sent to a Leipzig musical society an account of music in England. It is not ill-natured ; it shows every sign of a desire for fairness ; but it shows no unintelligence whatever, no knowledge, no power of using the pen. As Dr. Maclean himself is so desirous of being fair, we will emulate him, and begin by admitting that, so early as his first paragraph, he professes his incompetence to do the thing required of him. It is true he is quite incompetent for the task ; but then we know no one who could have achieved it in the

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space. His report covers sixteen pages; and into these he has tried to cram what could not have been got into one hundred and sixty pages of the same or of larger size. That he should have even attempted the thing throws immediate doubt on his judgment. A casual perusal of his work strengthens that doubt; a careful perusal removes it altogether, and leaves one in no doubt whatever that whoever should write an account of music in England, Dr. Charles Maclean is not the man.

The mere writing, to begin with, is of the crudest possible description. Our own theory with regard to it is that Dr. Maclean wrote the original in German, and his Leipzig friends, not satisfied with his use of their language, employed a German gentleman, who had perhaps acquired our tongue during a three months' stay here, to translate it back into English. There is no other way of accounting for so utterly unidiomatic a use of English. The first sentence, to give only one example, is not English at all: "An account of the expired London musical season," etc., reminds one of Mrs. Leo Hunter's "Expiring Frog"—and the whole article is thickly strewn with sentences, and indeed whole paragraphs, quite as un-English.

Dr. Maclean divides his report into nine sections, each with a title. Let us take them one by one, skipping those which are not worth attention. That dealing with the London season contains nothing but the quite obvious and the quite untrue, side by side. It simply tells the unsophisticated German when our season begins and when it ends, and points out that foreign artists would get a great deal more attention if they did not visit us at a time when foreign artists do visit us. That is to say, Dr. Maclean points out that during the season there are far too many

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concerts, and therefore many of them pass quite unregarded ; and he recommends foreign artists to come over in the "off" months. But if all the foreign artists did that, it would only result in another period of the year becoming the real musical season. If Dr. Maclean had recommended foreign artists not to come over at all, for several years at least, he would have served them and the English public and the English musical critics much better. The next section deals with Covent Garden, and contains nothing of any importance that every educated musical German did not know before. It is true that it mentions two or three petty details, such as the failure of the negotiations—spelt "negociations"—with Calvé, and recommends the reader not to confound Alvarez of the Paris Opera with Max Alvary, who, as every German knows, is dead. Incidentally Dr. Maclean takes up the cudgels for those wretched composers Donizetti and Bellini. He says: "The music [of 'Norma'] was vehemently attacked in part of the press ; not a worthy attitude to take towards that great master (*sic*) or to the Neapolitan school without which modern opera, Wagner included, would never have existed." This is neither grammar nor sense. An opera, however great, cannot be a great master, though, as in the case of "Norma," its composer may be a small master, or rather not a master at all ; and it is simply childish at this time of day to tell any intelligent person that Wagner owed anything to Bellini. Dr. Maclean also takes upon himself to speak for the multitude concerning Mr. de Lara's "Messaline." It was, he says, "considered a poor art-production gorgeously trapped." Who told Dr. Maclean anything of the sort ? The general public seemed well pleased with the opera—at least each performance was better attended than the previous one, and the work is to

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be given again next year. As far as expert opinion is concerned, it was nearly unanimous in favour of "Messaline." There was not a critic of any standing who did not praise it. True, a small 'clique, closely associated with the Academics, who are the curse of music in this country, violently attacked it and Mr. de Lara; but their criticisms carried no weight, as it was well known that personal reasons alone were at the bottom of the opposition. The paragraph on National Opera may be passed over without even a smile: it is entirely harmless, and contains nothing that has not already appeared in the press, and a great deal that has been contradicted by the "inspired" article in the *Saturday Review* to which we referred in the September issue of THE CHORD. The section in which the Philharmonic Society is discussed is one of the most amusing, though not the most amusing. First we are told that Wagner nearly wrecked what is sometimes called "our old society." It would have been a very good thing for music in England if he had quite wrecked it; but, as a mere matter of fact, he saved it from the destruction to which it was rushing. His season, as was long ago demonstrated by figures, was one of the most successful the Philharmonic ever had. After a lot of barren and utterly uninteresting detail, we come to the statement that "the Philharmonic more fairly represents the average English taste than any other institution. Its two mottoes may be *festinatio tarda* and *sat cito si sat bene* (it is sufficiently quick if it is sufficiently well); if it has never forced the pace, so it has never acted as boot on the wheel." This is really amazing. The Philharmonic does not in the least represent English taste: it is half a century behind the average English taste of to-day. It has always acted as "boot on the wheel."

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Instead of trying to give model performances of the master-works, it has always been so niggardly in the matter of rehearsals that its wretched concerts have become a by-word. On that point there has never been any difference of opinion amongst the serious critics: the only critics who have a word to say for it are those who are directly or indirectly in its pay. This is one of Dr. Maclean's most damaging statements about the state of English music. If the intelligent foreigner believes the intelligent Scot, what can he think of us after he has heard a Philharmonic concert! Mr. Wood's concerts are better than the Philharmonic's, the Crystal Palace concerts are better, the Richter and the Mottl concerts are better. The Philharmonic stands lowest; and all English musicians know that it stands lowest. Then, as to the works produced recently by the Philharmonic, it is quite astonishing to find that "Martucci brought his D. minor symphony; it has something the manner of Brahms, with a little of Tschai-kowsky, and an evident though slight veneer of Italian; if not absolutely original, it is much more so than most, and a refreshing novelty, intellectual and sympathetic." The truth is, of course, that Martucci's symphony is utterly stupid and uninteresting, and turned out to be only one more of the Philharmonic's dead failures. When Dr. Maclean comes to deal with "other concerts," he gives us more dull, barren detail, and then utters another gem of criticism. Perosi's music, it appears, "is founded on the bed-rock of the magnificent incontestable Church style, and those who scoffed did wrong." Dr. Maclean is apparently under some strange delusion. Mascagni, we may inform him, is still alive, and did not three hundred years ago write the *Missa Papæ Marcelli*. The portion of the report in which conductors are

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criticised may be passed over as merely foolish ; and we will also leave the discussion of the scientific side of music. And now we come to one of the most astounding things in the article, the portion dealing with journalism.

The *Musical Times*, owned by Novello & Co. Limited, is placed in "the front rank amongst English musical newspapers." We are informed that some of the columns of the *Musical Standard* are "rather disfigured by an extravagance of the new style first-person journalism, but it is the most independent and perhaps the most vigorous of English musical newspapers." With the latter part of this verdict we are very far from having any quarrel: the *Musical Standard* is by far the best musical weekly in England ; but to object to "first-person" criticism is to betray an utter ignorance of all the best art and literary criticism, and an equal ignorance of all the principles of all good criticism. THE CHORD is handled in a not unfriendly manner. It is described as "mainly æsthetic essayism"—whatever strange thing that may turn out to be: we wish Dr. Maclean would explain. "The ingredients for a recipe of musical æsthetics proper would seem to be: enthusiasm, analogy of other subjects and especially of other arts, translation of the art into language of the emotions, invective, epigram, water to dilute; the proportions of the first five varying with the idiosyncrasy of the writer, and quantity of the latter varying with his ability. Whether there is enough market for this class of writing, unless floated by a considerable amount of news, remains to be seen. THE CHORD articles are nearly all clever." While fully appreciating this last compliment, we must take the opportunity of declaring that we do not in the least understand the rest of Dr. Maclean's doubtless eloquent and able summing up of the merits and demerits of THE CHORD. "The

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ingredients of a recipe" must be some uncouth wild-fowl known only in Scotland; "an analogy of other subjects" is equally unfamiliar to us; the meaning of "mainly æsthetic essayism" we can only vaguely guess at. Perhaps some day we shall come to comprehend these mysteries; but meanwhile we make bold to tell Dr. Maclean that the public has shown a marked preference for the kind of writing which appears in *THE CHORD* (although it is not "floated by a considerable amount of news") to the fatuous, unimaginative, inartistic kind of writing which he appears to like. We say "he appears to like" advisedly; for, after so kindly reviewing *THE CHORD*, Dr. Maclean takes upon himself to place the critics in their proper order according to merit. This indeed is the most ludicrous part of his performance. Before one may safely review musical criticism and musical critics, it will be readily admitted by everyone nowadays (though it would not have been admitted five years ago) that the reviewer should know something of art criticism and of literary criticism—should know at least what has been done and the thing aimed at in art criticism and in literary criticism—should know, that is, something of the eternal principles of all criticism of artistic things. Dr. Maclean, as we have already said, seems to know nothing of these things; and anyone who knows anything of the musical criticism of to-day, and takes the trouble to read Dr. Maclean, will see at once that he knows nothing of these things. He places first amongst the critics no greater a personality than Mr. Maitland, whose criticisms can easily be read when they have with difficulty been found in the odd corners of the *Times* newspaper into which they are shoved by the wisdom of the editor of that sheet. Dr. Maclean talks about Mr. Maitland's "highest culture," seasoned "with an incisive humour." For our own part we have

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never seen in Mr. Maitland's writings any sign of culture other than the Kensington culture, which consists chiefly in a superficial reading of Browning; of his humour we do not remember a single example; and his knowledge of music was sufficiently illustrated by his edition of Purcell's "King Arthur," which had parts for two harpsichords, containing notes which did not exist and never had existed on the harpsichord. But Mr. Maitland's criticism is so wholly dull and uninformed that we will not trouble to discuss it. Next to Mr. Maitland, Dr. Maclean places a gentleman—a very excellent gentleman in his way—called Mr. Gilbert Webb, who assists various other critics when their work is too heavy. We are only too delighted to let Mr. Maitland play first to Mr. Webb's second; but we cannot help wondering whether Mr. Maitland or any other critic would like to be placed so near—even above him—to Mr. Webb. Mr. Webb is, we say, an excellent gentleman; but his writing is of the baldest description, revealing no imaginative or emotional power, any command of words, any sense of colour in words or in music, any individual judgment, or in fact any of the qualities which alone can justify the existence of criticism of any sort of any art; and instead of being critic of some of the papers in connection with which Mr. Maclean mentions him, he is simply an assistant of other critics. We say this with no desire to give Mr. Webb pain; but he himself must see that Dr. Maclean has put him in a position which he has not, as yet at any rate, earned. The placing of the other critics is just as silly, and need not be further spoken about.

We have devoted so much space to Dr. Maclean's manifesto—or whatever it may be called—not because of its own good or bad qualities, but because it has been

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published in this country and in Germany by Messrs. Breitkopf & Härtel, under what is called the auspices of the "Internationalen Musik-Gesellschaft," and it may therefore be taken by many readers to possess an accuracy and a weight of authority which it by no means possesses. We desire to protest most emphatically against the publication of such a document. It gives a totally false impression of the state of music in England; and music is in a bad enough plight here without the intelligent Scot rushing in to make the intelligent foreigner think us worse than we are. And to call the Philharmonic representative of even the average English taste, and to call Mr. Maitland and Mr. Webb the two leading English musical critics—to do these things is decidedly to make us appear worse than we are. There are better concerts than the Philharmonic's, and there are far better critics than Mr. Webb and Mr. Maitland.

Only one thing remains to be said: the London critics are at present asking one another "Who is Dr. Charles Maclean?" And we too ask the question; for we have never heard of the gentleman before. Perhaps the "Internationalen Musik-Gesellschaft" can tell us.

THE PROVINCIAL FESTIVALS OF 1899

THIS has not been a year of Festivals of first importance, and consequently I shall not be able to follow up my previous article with such a glowing account of the work accomplished during the past autumn as I should like. The provincial campaign began at Worcester, and was continued at Norwich and Sheffield. Scarborough and North Stafford also held musical celebrations, but to neither of these did I go, and therefore I can say nothing whatever about their deeds. When Leeds or Birmingham is in the field, then we are face to face with an enterprise which, taking it as a whole, is superior to any London entertainment. I propose to sum up, as impartially as I can, the work done in Worcester, Norwich, and Sheffield, and, as a warm champion of the Festivals, I feel my position to be so strong that I shall not hesitate to dwell on their weak points as well as on their good ones. But if the average Festival resembled that held at Worcester in September, I would say, Away with them! for a frequent repetition of such mediocrity and pretentiousness would be sufficient to damn musical art in England till that last day when celestial choirs will lull the critic's senses into a state of heavenly repose, and leave him only the pipe of peace to smoke amid the mansions of the bless'd.

Worcester is the only Festival that I have attended that

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absolutely justifies the editorial strictures passed upon these institutions in the first number of *THE CHORD*. There were two things responsible for this deplorable state of affairs in the "Faithful City." One was the preponderance of the clerical influence on the committee of management, and the other the conductor's lack of experience in the controlling and training of large forces. It is the custom at the Three Choirs celebrations for the Cathedral organist to assume the musical direction. In theory this is pleasing, but its practical application leaves something to be desired. What the performances would be like if we had had a local orchestra and local singers, plus a local conductor, it is beyond me to say. The Worcester chorus had not been selected with any apparent care or judgment; it had been badly trained, and its members, I should say, had been very careless as to attendance at rehearsal; in short, it had no manner of right to be considered a Festival chorus at all. Another of the abuses from which Worcester suffered (and this is common to all Festivals), was that of making the grand rehearsal a public performance—a most atrocious, money-grabbing proceeding. One can well understand how a young conductor was handicapped by such conditions, even an experienced man must here have felt their disadvantages. The redeeming feature of the Worcester Festival was the production of Professor Horatio Parker's cantata "*Hora Novissima*," which was sufficiently meritorious to warrant its Atlantic voyage. It is the first time, I believe, that America has been represented at an English Festival, and Mr. Parker did honour to his country. Not that I regard his work as the product of a great creative mind. But his writing is free and bold; it is the expression of a confident imagination, and it has about it a careless spontaneity which

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is undeniably attractive. He writes well for the voice, and his orchestration is clever; but Mr. Parker did not impress me with the idea that he possesses a strong individuality, or is one who has an original message for the world and is compelled to give it utterance. The other novelty was a Solemn Prelude by Mr. S. Coleridge Taylor, which was solemn enough in all conscience, and not much else.

Much more pleasing was the record of the week's work at Norwich. Here the chorus-master, Dr. Hill, had worked to good purpose; the choir was in every way most satisfactory, and this, combined with other good features, made the Festival typical of the country and an honour to its musical life. The novelties were not of commanding importance, but the committee had given employment to three English pens, and had decided on a work of Perosi's some long time before Mr. Robert Newman thought of exploiting the young Italian priest. It is unnecessary to dwell at any length on the "Passion," for the music is of the same character as that which met with so much adverse criticism last May at Queen's Hall. Never once did the composer rise to the height of his subject or grasp the tremendous possibilities of that greatest of human tragedies. Instead of sublime power, he gave us feminine pathos. Perosi's apologists plead that we have not heard his music under the conditions for which it was composed. True, the splendour of the Roman ritual, the gorgeous vestments of an impressive priesthood, the faintly floating odour of incense, the "dim religious light," the hallowed stones that have echoed the footsteps of holy men through ages past, and the mysterious solemnity that associates itself with every ancient cathedral, may excite a feeling of pious exaltation in the emotional listener which will altogether

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deaden his critical faculties; but music that is truly great does not require these adventitious aids to make it impressive or to convince us of its grandeur. We can feel the intensity of the "Eroica" Marche Funèbre as keenly in the Queen's Hall as we can in Westminster Abbey, and the celestial beauty of the "Unfinished Symphony" would lose nothing if it were performed in a barn. Perosi has failed in England, because, on his merits, he deserved to fail. He is not a charlatan, and if he could be persuaded to devote himself wholly to serious study for a few years, and lend a willing ear to good performances of choral and instrumental works of acknowledged supremacy, it is possible he might eventually give the world something of which it would be proud, and which it would not speedily allow to die. Mr. Elgar's contribution was a cycle of songs called "Sea Pictures," which are wholly delightful by reason of their charm and musicianly merit, and should achieve a wide popularity. Mr. Edward German's orchestral Suite, "The Seasons," did not suggest that the composer had anything new to say. What he said was in his own bright and cheerful manner, although his discourse was somewhat too long, and his "fourthly" might well be cut down to more reasonable dimensions. Such were the three novelties heard at Norwich. Quasi-festival novelties were Saint-Saën's "Samson and Delilah," and Mr. Coleridge Taylor's cantata "Hiawatha's Wedding-Feast," with a new overture (which was decidedly below the general level of the cantata). In other respects the programme was interesting, especially to audiences that have few opportunities of hearing works performed on a grand scale, and Signor Randegger well deserves a word of praise for his excellent direction of the Festival as a whole.

It is the mission of the Festival not to be local, but to

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gather within its environment the best the country can show, and to be a feast of song that shall truly represent the national art life. This cannot be done by making it a glorified parochial musical *soirée*, with the vicar as treasurer and the lord of the manor for president. Localise the Festival, and it will languish ; make it general, and it becomes a magnet which draws to itself the most vital elements of musical life. The Sheffield Festival, for example, is a young institution, and the committee may have thought it more prudent to advance slowly than to enter into a too premature competition with Leeds and Birmingham. But I should like to have seen some little enterprise shown, as, except in one particular, there was nothing in connection with the celebration that was at all removed from the commonplace. It is not enough for Sheffield to know that this year it has surpassed the world's record in chorus singing. True, the central feature of a Festival is its chorus, and all honour is due to Dr. Henry Coward for the manner in which he has selected and trained the good material that lay ready to hand beneath the grim shadows of Sheffield's hideous chimneys. It was a chorus by the side of which poor Mr. August Manns' Crystal Palace Orchestra appeared a paltry pigmy ; a squeaky voiced dwarf in a sphere of heavenly sound. The Crystal Palace band was as good as any possible local orchestra could be,—better, in fact ; but with such singers we felt we wanted the best instrumentalists the world could produce, and the best solo singers also. The Sheffield committee must not rest content with this year's triumph. In 1902 they must have a better band ; they must strengthen the ranks of their principal artists, and do their duty to English music by a few well-placed commissions among native composers.

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And now let me sum up the position. As the barest justification for the existence and continuance of these triennial institutions, I may point to the fact that even in a year when the Festivals have not been of the best they have still given employment to three English composers, and introduced an American writer who showed that he well deserved recognition on this side of the Atlantic. Bad as was the Worcester Festival from many points of view, it is but fair to give it full credit for its enterprise in inviting Mr. Horatio Parker to bring with him his "*Hora Novissima*"; nor must it be forgotten that to the same city we owe our knowledge of Mr. Edward Elgar, the most able and characteristic of our young composers. But for the opportunity the Three Choirs Festival gave him, he might still be pursuing the uneventful tenour of his way as a teacher of the violin among the sequestered hills and vales of Malvern. Norwich was the first to stretch forth its hand to welcome and encourage the young Italian priest, Dom Perosi; and if Robert Newman had not exposed the shallow basis on which his reputation rested, the eyes of musical England would have been centred on Norwich last October, and there would have been an unwonted display of curiosity in connection with "*The Passion of Christ*." At Sheffield there was a wonderful exhibition of choral singing, and such masterpieces of oratorio as "*The Messiah*" were given with a perfection, a subtlety of expression, an emotional power, to which we in London are utter and complete strangers. About Mr. Coleridge Taylor's "*The Death of Minnehaha*," produced at the North Staffordshire Festival, I can say nothing, as I was not there to hear it; but reliable authorities are highly disposed in its favour, and therefore that must decidedly go to the credit side of this year's account.

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Need I say more to emphasise my contention that the Festival is one of the most beneficial factors in our musical life? I scarcely think it necessary; but then its merits and uses are so obvious to me that perhaps I do not make sufficient allowance for the fact that all do not see with my eyes and hear with my ears. By way of conclusion, however, I will briefly return to the "charity-bazaar" point of view adopted in the editorial article in the first number of THE CHORD. The enormous cost of each of these Festivals is sufficient answer to the charge that charity takes an unfair advantage of music; the keen desire to belong to the chorus, and the crowded audiences, form an obvious denial to the assertion that "it represses musical activity in its vicinity"; the standard of achievement is, as a rule, higher than that which characterises similar performances in London; great numbers of people hear works which but for the Triennial Festival might never come their way; and lastly, if there is a surplus, it might just as well be handed over to the local hospitals as go into the pocket of some enterprising impresario, with a much keener eye to his own interests than the average Festival committee has for the well-being of the charities which are ultimately to derive some measure of benefit from the voluntary labour of the many enthusiastic gentlemen with whom the management of our Festivals rest. Nor do I believe there is any touting for charity. The briefest and baldest of announcements on the preliminary programme indicates the purpose to which the profits will be devoted, and after that one loses sight altogether of any ulterior purpose beyond that of musical art. At the Three Choir Festivals the guarantors have each year to make good the inevitable deficit, and the charities only benefit by the collections that are made at the

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Cathedral doors, so that the Festival "does not divert to charity the money that should go to music ; nor prevent innocent people giving to music what they might give if they knew their Festival subscriptions were entirely devoted to charity." It is a musical feast for which people are prepared to pay as they pay for the opera or any other enjoyment in town or country.

B. W. Findon.

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MR. R. R. TERRY, a musician who is already known to readers of *THE CHORD* as one of our most esteemed contributors, brought his choir from Downside Monastery to sing Byrde's Mass in D minor at the opening of St. Benedict's Church, Ealing, on Sunday, 26th November. Naturally all those who take an interest in the old music, and had heard of the function, went to Ealing and tried to get admitted, and some of them succeeded. The Prior of Downside was good enough to invite a correspondent of *THE CHORD* to be present; and he writes us as follows: "The rendering of Byrde's D minor Mass was in most respects excellent, and in only one or two defective. Mr. Terry is, of course, a master of the art of getting the utmost out of a choir, and he is also an enthusiastic student of the old Church music, especially English Church music, on which he very frequently writes. On this occasion such faults as there were in the performance were the kind of faults that it seems almost impossible to avoid sometimes, owing to circumstances which a conductor cannot always control. His tenors were not all they should have been; and on their heads rests the blood of the two or three slaughtered passages. The rest of the voices were fine, especially the trebles and altos. The Sanctus and Benedictus were magnificently given. The Gloria also went well, and the Agnus Dei was touching and lovely beyond the power of words to describe. The interest of the experiment was that it proved that Byrde's music, and music such as Byrde's, is emphatically the music for English Roman Catholic churches. It is at once ceremonial and emotional in character; and it never degenerates on the one hand into mere music of pomp and display, or becomes on the other hand too intimate and personal to be out of place in a service of ritual. It is to be hoped that Mr. Terry and other choirmasters will give us more of this kind of music." We entirely agree with our correspondent on this last point. But, while giving Mr. Terry full credit for his share in the work—a share that he performs admirably owing to his tact, zeal, and fine musicianship—we think the Prior of Downside deserves also our

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thanks for encouraging the production of Byrde's and the other old music. In far too many Roman churches, as Mr. Blackburn insists in an article in this issue of *THE CHORD*, the music is simply scandalous. There is plenty of fine music waiting to be sung, music written for the Roman Church, and perfectly in keeping with the character of the Roman service. The sooner other choirmasters imitate Mr. Terry the better; and the sooner the Roman clergy imitate the Prior of Downside the better. In the end nothing is gained by the use of bad art—very often no art at all—but the boldest, least interesting kind of vulgarity, in any church.

SOON after the New Year the Unicorn Press hope to publish the first volume of the *Musician's Library*, a companion series to the *Artist's Library*. This series was planned two years ago; and last year several writers undertook to do certain volumes; but the enormous amount of preliminary has delayed until now the carrying out of the idea. The series will be under the editorship of Mr. JOHN F. RUNCIMAN, who will lead off with a *Life of Purcell*. Mr. Runciman's idea is first that the whole series shall form a coherent whole, and show clearly the relation of each master of music to the other masters. Second, each life will also show the relation of each master to his own time; will show, that is, how he was influenced by contemporary events—literary, artistic, political—which are not usually supposed to have anything to do with music. Hitherto it has been thought that music could only be written about by musicians, and musicians have been for the most part a very illiterate set of men. They have neither taken the trouble, nor thought it worth while taking the trouble, to trace all the circumstances that made the masters the kind of masters they were instead of something else. Has any one, for instance, yet told us anything of the music that Wagner heard in his youth? No one has; nothing is known of the matter save that he heard some Beethoven and some Weber. Even that little is more than is commonly known about Beethoven, Bach, Mozart and Purcell. In the *Musician's Library* the results of careful investigation of all these matters will be properly set forth. Nothing will be omitted that may have helped to mould the characters of masters, have influenced their thoughts and feelings and their particular modes of expression. We understand that the Editor's aim is to provide in the first place a series of text-books for students; and the greatest pains will be taken to secure perfect accuracy. At the same time a scheme has been worked out by which the ordinary reader who does not want to be burdened with a mass of detail, will be able to read straight on; and it need scarcely be said that Mr. Runciman will see to it that the writing is good merely as writing. Each volume will be interesting reading for those who care nothing for dates and barren facts; while the student will find all the dates, and the facts so used as

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to appear no longer barren, but important factors in the great men's lives. The volumes already arranged are *Purcell*, by the Editor; *Wagner*, by Edward A. Baughan, the brilliant editor of the *Musical Standard*; *Mozart*, by Vernon Blackburn of the *Pall Mall Gazette*; and *Gluck*, by Sidney Thompson. In connection with this, we may add that the statement made in some of the musical papers to the effect that the authorities of the British Museum contemplate the issue of a similar series, is necessarily without foundation. The British Museum authorities have no power to do anything of the sort, and any publisher issuing a book purporting to come officially from them, would place himself in a serious position.

BLANCHE MARCHESI has been to London, and again has she sung at two concerts. According to certain critics of light and leading, Blanche Marchesi remains the supreme exponent of the art which has triumphed over nature. And so at one time she undoubtedly was; for when she confined herself to the singing of songs which were well within the capacity of her not particularly beautiful voice, songs in which the fineness of her dramatic instinct far outshadowed the defects of that voice, then we all unanimously praised her art. She did not sing in those days: she hinted a voice, and expressed the drama. Praise came, and with praise Blanche Marchesi evidently began to believe that she could sing.

So many of us, however, are so everyday and purblind, that once we have established a convention it takes us a very, very long while before we will allow ourselves to realise that the convention is a limited one. If applied to any personality, so great is that blindness, that we will allow a person to say or do almost any mortal thing, and follow his antics with joy and applause. And so, now that Blanche Marchesi has blossomed out into singing elaborate and decorative music, certain moles still declare her to be a great artist. In such music, which nearly always disallows any display of dramatic feeling, she is worse than nothing; she is absolutely appalling. Her heavy, overweighted tone stumbles over anything like a florid passage like a very fat man running downhill; and the inevitable result is, that she does not even sing in tune. Let her go back to her less ambitious days, if she can, and judicious people will be able then to award her a discriminating praise. As the matter stands praise would be foolish and imbecile.

A CORRESPONDENT who has just come from Ghent, where he heard a performance of Isidore de Lara's "*Moina*," which was produced originally two years ago at Monte Carlo, writes of it to the following effect:—"I have heard and enjoyed '*Moina*.' Without attempting to compare it to '*Messaline*,' which strikes me as being by far the greater

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work, I nevertheless find here a certain exuberance and fulness of emotion, which must remain extremely engrossing. In portions, indeed, it has the thrill that only the sincerest artist could give expression to. There is much melody of extreme interest and fineness here and there through the work; and here and there again it grows into exquisiteness. Moreover, it has variety, a good deal of passion, and in some situations it rises to a height that is very remarkable. When one considers the stuff which the learned composers of England turn out amid whirlwinds of praise, and how in 'Moïna' we have a work of genuine merit absolutely unknown in that country, yet the work of an Englishman, it makes one too sadly realise how far we still stand from the time when it will be possible even to dream of England as a musical country."

WITH the exception of an *African Suite*, by S. Coleridge Taylor, the pianoforte music sent us for review from Messrs. Augener consists of new editions of old works. There is little, therefore, to be said about them. We have two books of Liszt's *Paganini Studies*, edited by Edward Dannreuther, three books of *Stephen Heller's Studies*, edited by Herrmann Scholtz, one volume on the *Art of Phrasing*, edited by O. Thümer, and *Louis Plaidy's Technical Studies*. They are all issued in Messrs. Augener's well-known form, and are clearly and accurately printed. Moreover, those that have passed through the reviser's hands, have done so almost untainted. The editors have confined themselves solely to the task of editing, and have resisted the temptation to supplement the works with ideas of their own. Coleridge Taylor's *African Suite* consists of four numbers, an Introduction, a Negro Love Song, a Valse, and a Negro Dance. It is not without its merits. A useful and instructive little book is the *Pianist's Handbook*, by Franklin Peterson; but *Rhymes on the Rules of Harmony*, by C. H. G. Knowles, is as ridiculous as the other is useful. The "Rhymes" are founded on Dr. Prout's "Harmony," which statement explains the following verse on Major Common Chords:—

"But may I write a common chord
Upon the mediant?
Well, Dr. Prout, *he* says you may,
Macfarren says you shan't."

Mr. Knowles concludes his "Rhymes" with this modest postlude:—

"Now, if in keeping all these rules
You never do grow slack,
You *may* become a Mendelssohn,
Or e'en a 'mighty Bach';
But if their bonds your peace disturb,
And seem your Pegasus to curb,
Remember well that Heaven's gate
Is aye attained through passage 'strait.'"

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Young students will obtain a grip of harmony no sooner by this method than by a text-book written in simple prose. Moreover, Mr. Knowles misleads his readers as to the pronunciation of the "mighty master's" name.

AMONGST Messrs. Schott & Son's recent publications for the piano-forte is a pretty Nocturne by G. Sgambati and two pieces by Emil Sauer. The best of the latter is a "Sempre Scherzando." Edward Elgar's "Salut d'Amour" is a very pleasing work. A set of pieces by Robert Oehme savour sometimes of Schumann, sometimes of Schubert, and occasionally of Chopin. They are all, however, effective, and should be welcome to pianists. "Die Zwölf Monate," by M. Pery, are divided into four sets, each containing three pieces. They are very short but melodious, and should prove of value to the young student.

WE have not received many violin and piano pieces, but they are of very fair quality. Most of them come from Messrs. Schott's, while one album is from Messrs. Augener. The latter consists of twelve pieces, "by masters of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries." It seems rather stretching the term "Masters," when we find names that to many are totally unknown, and that to others are scarcely more than a name. They include John Barrett, Robert Valentine, William Babell, John Alcock, William Corbett, John Stanley, Lewis Granom, Daniel Purcell, and John Lenton. Still, the album makes very pleasant reading. Besides pieces by the above-named writers, there are some interesting little things by Boyce, Arne, and Charles Burney. As regards Messrs. Schott's publications, the best, and at the same time the most difficult, is a "Danse Visionaire," by Johan Halvorsen. A "Reverie," by Ernest Newlandsmith, has nothing except rather common tunefulness to recommend it, while both Gerald Walenn's "Feuille d'Album" and "Harlequinade" would make useful studies in their own particular ways. A "Serenade" by George Pittrich is a good enough drawing-room piece.

